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Report of the Economic and Social Council

United Nations Population Award, 2017

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Secretary of the Committee for the United Nations Population Award. The report, which covers the Award for 2017, was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1982/112.

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Report of the Secretary of the Committee for the United Nations Population Award on the United Nations Population Award, 2017

I. Introduction

1. On 17 December 1981, the General Assembly adopted resolution 36/201, entitled "Establishment of the United Nations Population Award". The Award is presented annually to an individual or individuals, to an institution or institutions, or to any combination thereof, for the most outstanding contribution to increasing awareness of population questions or to finding solutions to them.

2. The Committee for the United Nations Population Award selects the laureate for the Award. The Committee is composed of representatives of 10 States Members of the United Nations, elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of three years. The Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund acts as Secretary of the Committee and submits to the General Assembly an annual report on the Award and its Trust Fund.

3. In its decision 41/445, the General Assembly amended article 2, paragraph 1, of the regulations governing the Award so that an individual and an institution may share the Award.

4. In its decision 1987/129, the Economic and Social Council amended the rules of procedure of the Committee accordingly.

5. The current elected members of the Committee are Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Benin, the Gambia, Ghana, Haiti, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Paraguay and Poland.

6. During its organizational meeting on 17 February 2017, the Committee elected the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations, Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee, as Chair for 2017.

II. United Nations Population Award, 2017

7. The Committee received 21 nominations from qualified nominators for the 2017 Award: 10 were for the individual category and 11 for the institutional category. On 11 April 2017, in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly, and after a thorough review of the nominations, the Committee selected Dr. Hans Rosling of Sweden (posthumously)[1] in the individual category and the Association des Chefs Traditionnels du Niger in the institutional category.

A. Individual category

8. The Committee selected Dr. Rosling in recognition of his dedication and unwavering commitment to public health, population dynamics and the eradication of poverty in his multiple capacities as a physician, a researcher and a teacher, and for his remarkable contribution to a better understanding of international and global health through his numerous publications and initiatives.

[1] Dr. Rosling was nominated in 2016 but died on 7 February 2017, before the selection process was completed.

9. As a champion of international cooperation, Dr. Rosling led health research collaborations with universities in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. In order to educate and raise awareness of global health issues, Dr. Rosling regularly gave pro bono presentations and produced a number of widely distributed documentaries and educational videos, which can be found on the Gapminder website, which he co-founded.

10. While serving as a medical officer in northern Mozambique in the 1980s, Dr. Rosling's investigations led to the discovery of the cause of the epidemic paralytic disease known as konzo. He spent two decades studying outbreaks of the disease in remote rural areas across Africa.

11. Before his untimely death in February 2017, Dr. Rosling was professor of international health at the Karolinska Institute, Sweden.

B. Institutional category

12. The Committee selected the Association des Chefs Traditionnels du Niger in recognition of its unique contribution to ensuring that population issues and their solutions were placed at the centre of development in the Niger over the past decade, not only in communities but also at the national level.

13. Through its members, who are Niger's traditional chiefs, the Association has promoted the improvement of reproductive health care for women, girls and children in general. It has advocated the elimination of child, early and forced marriage and has supported girls' education, empowering them to make appropriate choices in their lives. The Association has been a powerful voice and advocate for increased investment in health and education.

14. Through its advocacy, the Association has created an enabling environment for addressing population issues and has broken long-held taboos by publicly making commitments to family planning and reproductive health in general. Since 2001, the Association has worked to promote immunization in order to prevent diseases and mortality.

III. Financial matters

15. As at 31 December 2016, the Trust Fund of the United Nations Population Award had a total fund balance of $1,739,958.32. Interest income in 2016 was $16,462.18. Expenditure in 2017, including prizes awarded to the two laureates, totalled $88,495.36.